IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the present application:

1-93.   (Canceled)

94. (Currently amended) A method implemented in a storage server, the method comprising:

receiving, at [[a]] the storage server, requests for a plurality of files stored at maintained by the storage server, from at least one client of a plurality of clients of the storage server;

in response to the requests for the plurality of files, causing, by the storage server, each of a plurality of cluster devices that are external to the storage server and to the plurality of clients to execute an operation on the plurality of files simultaneously;

at the storage server, receiving results of the plurality of cluster devices' operations on the plurality of files from the plurality of cluster devices; and

responding to said at least one of the plurality of clients regarding the requests according to said results.

95. (Previously presented) The method of claim 94, wherein said operation comprises a virus scan operation, a compression operation, or an encryption operation.

96. (Currently amended) The method of claim 94, wherein causing, by the storage server, each of a plurality of cluster devices that are external to the storage server to execute an operation on the plurality of files simultaneously includes sending an identifier and path of each of the plurality of files from the storage server to the plurality of cluster devices.

97. (Previously presented) The method of claim 96, wherein said sending is accomplished by using non-uniform memory access.

98. (Previously presented) The method of claim 96, wherein said sending is accomplished by using a communications network.

99. (Previously presented) The method of claim 96, wherein said sending is accomplished by using a direct connection.

100. (Currently amended) The method of claim 94, wherein responding to said at least one of the plurality of clients regarding the requests according to said results comprises:

for each of the plurality of files, sending the corresponding file to a client requesting the corresponding file if said results indicate that the corresponding file is safe to send.

101. (Previously presented) The method of claim 100, wherein a file is considered to be safe if the file is not infected with any viruses.

102. (Previously presented) The method of claim 94, wherein the plurality of cluster devices is a cluster of interconnected personal computers.

103. (Currently amended) An apparatus comprising:

a processor;

a mass storage facility, the mass storage facility storing a plurality of files;

a network interface through which to communicate with a plurality of clients;

a memory coupled to the processor, the memory storing instructions which when

executed by the processor, cause the processing system to perform a process, the process

comprising:

receiving requests for the plurality of files from at least one of the plurality of clients;

in response to the requests for the plurality of files, requesting a plurality of cluster

devices external to the apparatus and to the plurality of clients to scan the plurality of files

~~simultaneously~~ for viruses, said requesting including sending an identifier and path of each of the

plurality of files to the plurality of cluster devices; and

receiving results from the plurality of cluster devices regarding the scanning of the

plurality of files; and

responding to said at least one of the plurality of clients regarding the requests according

to the results.

104. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 103, wherein sending an identifier and path

of each of the plurality of files to the plurality of cluster devices is accomplished by using non-

uniform memory access.

105. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 103, wherein sending an identifier and path

of each of the plurality of files to the plurality of cluster devices is accomplished by using a

communications network.

106. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 103, wherein sending an identifier and path of each of the plurality of files to the plurality of cluster devices is accomplished by using a direct connection.

107. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 103, wherein responding to <u>said at least one of the plurality of clients regarding</u> the requests according to the results comprises:

for each of the plurality of files, sending the corresponding file to a client requesting the corresponding file if the results indicate that the corresponding file is safe to send.

108. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 107, wherein a file is considered to be safe if the file is not infected with any virus.

109. (Currently amended) A machine-readable medium having sequences of instructions stored therein which, when executed by a processor <u>of a storage server</u>, cause the processor to perform a process comprising:

receiving requests for a plurality of files ~~stored at a~~ <u>maintained by the</u> storage server <u>from at least one of a plurality of clients of the storage server</u>;

<u>in response to the requests for the plurality of files,</u> requesting a plurality of cluster devices <u>that are external to the storage server and to the plurality of clients</u> to scan the plurality of files ~~simultaneously~~ for viruses, said requesting including sending an identifier and path of each of the plurality of files to the plurality of cluster devices; and

receiving results from the plurality of cluster devices regarding the scanning <u>of the plurality of files</u>; and

responding to <u>said at least one of the plurality of clients regarding</u> the requests according to the results.

110. (Previously presented) The machine-readable medium of claim 109, wherein sending an identifier and path of each of the plurality of files to the plurality of cluster devices is accomplished by using non-uniform memory access.

111. (Previously presented) The machine-readable medium of claim 109, wherein sending an identifier and path of each of the plurality of files to the plurality of cluster devices is accomplished by using a communications network.

112. (Previously presented) The machine-readable medium of claim 109, wherein sending an identifier and path of each of the plurality of files to the plurality of cluster devices is accomplished by using a direct connection.

113. (Currently amended) The machine-readable medium of claim 109, wherein responding to <u>said at least one of the plurality of clients regarding</u> the requests according to the results comprises:

for each of the plurality of files, sending the corresponding file to a client requesting the corresponding file if the results indicate that the corresponding file is safe to send.

114. (Previously presented) The machine-readable medium of claim 109, wherein a file is considered to be safe if the file is not infected with any virus.

115. (New) An apparatus comprising:

a processor;

a mass storage facility, the mass storage facility storing a plurality of files;

a network interface through which to communicate with a plurality of clients;

a memory coupled to the processor, the memory storing instructions which when executed by the processor, cause the processing system to perform a process, the process comprising:

receiving a first request for a file of the plurality of files from a first client of the plurality of clients;

in response to the first request, requesting a cluster device of a plurality of cluster devices external to the apparatus and to the plurality of clients to scan the file for viruses; and

receiving a result from the cluster device regarding the scanning of the file; and

responding the first request by sending the file to the first client if the result indicates that the file is not infected with any virus.

116. (New) The apparatus of claim 115, wherein the process further comprises:

storing the result;

receiving a second request for the file from a second client of the plurality of clients; and

determining whether it is safe to send the file to the second client based on the result.